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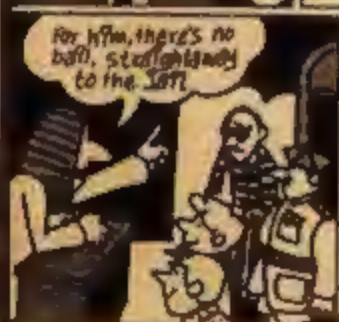
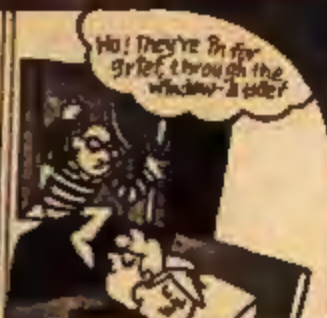
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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 4

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MIND IS A MIRROR

Once upon a time there lived three brothers. Their father had died a long time ago, and now the mother lay on her death bed. She called her two elder sons and said, "Vijay, Anand, look after your youngest brother, Ashok. See that he comes to no harm."

Vijay and Anand promised to do so and she died peacefully.

From that day on, Ashok did not lack for anything and lived like a prince in the loving care of his elder brothers. Vijay and Anand got married but their wives did not approve of the idle ways of Ashok.

One day they spoke to their husbands tactfully about this. "You promised your mother that you would bring Ashok up without a care in the world. You did not promise to keep him with you all your lives. Now that he is a grown lad, he should go out and earn his livelihood."

This sounded reasonable to Vijay and Anand. But they did not speak about this to their brother. Instead each built a house and began to live separately. Ashok was left alone in his parental home. As he had not learnt any trade he could not earn his living. The result was that ~~mini~~ of the time he starved.

One day he had a strange dream. A woman appeared before him and said, "I am your mother. I cannot bear to see you suffer. Therefore, I give you the power of reading other people's minds. This ability will promote your fortunes in the world."

Ashok woke up in sweat but the dream had made a deep impression on him. He decided to do something about it. So he presented himself at the royal court and prayed for a job. He was appointed as guard at the palace gates.

One day a foreign Lord visited the court of the king. When Ashok saw him, he guessed his intentions. So he ran to the chief of the guards and exclaimed, "Sir, this Lord comes with an evil mind. In fact he has brought a poisoned dagger with which to kill the king."

At first the chief refused to believe him but Ashok was so insistent that finally the Chief Minister came to hear about it. He called Ashok before him and said, "Boy, you must be off your head. This Lord has helped our king many a time. However, if you should lie about this matter, I shall truly take your head off."

Ashok replied, "Sir, what I

say is nothing but the truth. If it should prove false, you can work your will on me."

Impressed by his earnestness, the Minister went to warn his royal master and found the latter in conversation with the Lord. At the moment the Lord was saying, "Sire, what I have to tell you is very important. But I can tell you only in the utmost secrecy."

The king replied, "Very well. We can go into our private chamber. No one will disturb us there."

Just then the Minister whispered Ashok's warning into his ears. The king was shocked to hear this and ordered his guards to search the Lord. Despite the





protests of the visitor, the search was conducted and sure enough they uncovered a poisoned dagger which the Lord had concealed on his person. The angry king executed the would be assassin on the spot. He was grateful to Ashok for saving his life and appointed him as his personal bodyguard.

The royal family consisted of two princesses and a prince. The Queen had died a long time ago and the king had never remarried. The princesses had a number of maids to carry out their bidding.

One day, Ashok saw one of the maids bringing food for the king. Something struck him and he ran to the king and

exclaimed, "Sire, don't touch the food that this maid brings. It has been poisoned by your enemies and this maid is in their pay."

The king wanting to test Ashok's words threw some food to the house cat. The little animal ate and soon curled up in agony. In a short while it was dead. Though the king now had clear proof of the duplicity of the maid, he wanted to be doubly sure and unknown to the woman posted a guard at her doors. In the dead of night, a spy came to her window and was given a letter. The king's guard pounced on him and the letter was delivered to the king who was pained to read it.

news about his death from poisoning. Forthwith he slew the offending maid and then in great surprise asked Ashok how he had found out all this. The lad informed him of the marvellous gift of mind-reading bequeathed to him by his mother.

Some days later, the king sent for Ashok. When the lad arrived, he said, "Ashok, I have a task for you. I intend to give my daughter away in marriage to the prince of my neighbouring territory. In fact, the suitor is arriving at the palace now. But my daughter refused to marry him. I want you to tell me what my daughter thinks about this wedding."

Ashok replied, "Your daughter wishes to marry the man of her choice. But she thinks you will not agree to that. That is why she rejects all suitors who seek her hand."

The king asked eagerly. "Who is this man of her choice?"

Ashok replied, "It is I."

Taken aback this simple statement the king looked at the princess and read in her face confirmation of Ashok's words. Angrily he exclaimed, "Is that so? Well, do you know what is in my mind right now?"

"You are disgusted at the thought of marrying off your daughter to a poor commoner. But it is not his fault. The princess desires to marry him. Therefore you are ready to pardon me."

The king smiled and said, "True, I shan't punish one so innocent as you. I shall give my daughter in marriage to you."

And so it happened. Ashok was married to the princess. Soon he became the king of the land and lived happily.



The Prince And The Golden Peahen

Once upon a time, in a kingdom far away, there lived a king who had a golden apple tree. Each day, it blossomed and each night the fruit formed but always it had gone by the next morning.

The king was very cross about this and he told his youngest son to keep watch for the thief.

That night the prince settled down to watch. He could see quite well, for the golden apples had all ripened and the glow from them lit up the palace quite clearly.

As midnight struck, the prince saw nine golden peahens fly down and settle on the branches. The ninth immediately changed into a beautiful girl. When the prince saw her, he fell in love with her at once and asked her who she was and where she came from, but she told him only that she came from a far country.

At one o'clock, the girl said that she must leave, for the peahens had collected all the golden apples.

"Give me an apple for my father," said the prince and the girl gave him one. Then she changed into a peahen again and flew away.

The next night, the prince waited for the peahens and again the next night, but they did not come.

Finally, he went to his father and told him that he must set out to find the peahen who had changed into a beautiful girl, for he had fallen in love with her.

The prince set off to travel all over the world until he had found his beautiful golden peahen, but no-one he met could ever tell him where he might find her.

One day, tired and unhappy, the prince was walking along a road when he met a hermit. "Old man," said the prince, "can you tell me where to find nine golden peahens?"

"Take this road, my son," said the hermit. "Follow it, always bearing right and it will bring you to the gate of the City of the Peahens."

Thanking the hermit, the prince went on. Sure enough, the road led him to the gate of a city. There was a guard at the gate and when the prince told the guard who he was, he led him straight to the queen's palace. The queen was deligh-

ted. "I knew you would set out to find me," she said. "Now we can be married at once."

The prince was very happy with his beautiful bride and for a time all went well. Then the queen had to go away for a few days. When she left, she gave





the prince ■ the keys of the palace.

"These will open ■ the doors," she told him. "And these twelve keys are the keys ■ ■ twelve dungeons. You may ■ anywhere you like, but do not open the twelfth dungeon." Then she left.

The prince soon became lonely, then ■ became bored and restless. He explored all the palace, then he went down ■ the dungeons. He opened them ■ ■ the twelfth one, but at last his curiosity overcame him. He put the key in the lock of the twelfth dungeon and opened the door.

All he saw was a big barrel,

bound with ■ hoops, lying in the middle of the floor. A voice from the barrel called, "Give me a cup of water, I am dying of thirst."

"Surely," thought the prince, "there can be no harm in that," and he fetched a cup of water and poured it ■ the barrel, through the bung-hole. As he did so, one of the iron hoops around the barrel burst.

"More water," called the voice from inside, "or I shall ■ of thirst."

The prince fetched a second ■ of water and as he poured it ■ another hoop burst. ■ the ■ cup of water, ■ barrel burst into pieces and a

terrible dragon rushed out and disappeared through the door.

A little later, the queen's servant ■■■ rushing back to the palace. ■■■ told the prince that they had been ■■■ their way home, when a terrible dragon had seized the queen and carried her away.

Filled with remorse, the prince set out ■■■ find her. As he walked along he came ■■■ a lake and he saw a little fish, jumping about pitifully at the side of the lake. "Please put me back in the water," it gasped, ■■■ the prince picked it up gently and put it back in ■■■ lake. The ■■■ ■■■ around happily. "Some day I may ■■■ of ■■■ to you," it said. "Take a scale from my back, and if you need me, rub it."

The prince went on his way and soon came to a fox, caught

in a trap. "Please release me," the fox begged, pitifully, so the prince opened the trap and let him out. "Take a hair from my tail," said the fox. "If ever you need me, ■■■ it."

Farther on, ■■■ prince found a wolf, his foot pinned beneath a big rock. "Please move this heavy rock and free me," begged the wolf. The prince put his shoulder to the big rock and rolled it down the hill.

"Thank you," said the wolf. "Take a hair from my tail and rub it if ever ■■■ need help."

The prince went ■■■ until he saw the old hermit whom he had met before.

"Old man," said the prince. "Can you tell me where I can find the home of the terrible dragon?"

"I ■■■ tell you," said the hermit, "but do not think you



can rescue the queen by yourself, for the dragon has a horse which is so swift, that nothing can escape from it. If you want to rescue the queen, you must go to the old woman who lives in the mountains and ask her for her mare. It is the sister of the dragon's horse and far swifter and stronger. Only that way can you take the queen back in safety."

The prince set out once for the old woman's home and when he reached there he asked to buy the mare. "I will sell her, but if you guard her safely for three nights, she is yours," said the old woman. "But if you lose her, I will

off your head."

The prince led the mare out to the pasture and to make sure he did not lose her, he sat firmly on her back, holding her bridle, but near midnight he slumbered and when he awoke, he was sitting on the fence holding the bridle and the mare had disappeared.

He looked everywhere but could not find her. In despair, he took out the fish scale and rubbed it. At once, the fish appeared and the prince told him about the lost mare. "The mare has turned into a fish and is with us," said the fish. "Strike the water with her bridle and call her and she will come."





The prince did so and the mare returned.

The next night, the same thing happened. This time, the prince called the fox and found that the [redacted] had disguised herself [redacted] a fox. The old woman was very angry when the prince returned safely with the mare for the second day, for she did not want to lose her precious horse.

The third night, the mare [redacted] among the wolves, but the prince soon found her. Next morning, he [redacted] to the old woman and claimed his reward and she had to give him the mare.

At once, the prince rode to the dragon's palace. [redacted] quickly found his queen, who was overjoyed [redacted] him, [redacted] put her in front of him, on the horse. Then they rode away, back to their kingdom.

The dragon returned, only to find his captive gone. "After them," he roared, furiously, beating his horse fiercely.

The dragon's horse galloped after the mare. "Wait for me, sister," it called. "I can gallop no faster and this dragon will kill me if I do not catch you up."

"Are you so foolish as to carry such a monster, when you could shake him off by merely kicking up your heels?" the mare called back.

At this, the horse kicked up its heels and the dragon fell off on [redacted] the sharp rocks, with such [redacted] thud that it broke into little pieces.

The queen mounted the dragon's horse and they rode back to their kingdom where they reigned happily [redacted] after.



A CLEVER THEFT

One day Akbar and Birbal were deep in conversation. Birbal said, "However careful we may be, there are some workers who deceive us easily."

Akbar asked, "Can someone escape the most watchful eyes? Can you prove it?" Birbal smiled and replied, "Sire, there are goldsmiths who put away a sizable quantity of gold and there are tailors who waste cloth. I shall send you a tailor. Give him an expensive silk material and ask him to make you a dress. Place your guards all round him. Still he will steal considerable portions of your cloth."

"Done," said Akbar.

Gulam, the royal tailor, was sent for and Akbar said, "Gulam, here is the most expensive silk material. I want you to make a blouse for the Queen. But you must cut the cloth here.

In fact, you can go home only after you have finished the job."

Gulam sat down to work under the watchful eyes of three royal guards. He spent three days and three nights on the work and on the fourth day Gulam's young son came in search of him.

"Father, you haven't come home for three days. Mother is worried."

"I'll come only after I finish making this blouse. That's why I am here."

"But, father, normally it takes you only two hours to make a blouse. Why should this take you four days?"

"Go off", cried Gulam. "What do you know about stitching a blouse? Don't waste my time in useless talk. If you loiter here, I shall kick you down the stairs."

"I won't go," replied the

spirited lad. Therefore, Gulam grew angry and hurled his shoe at him. The lad picked up the shoe and ran down the street. The guards laughed at this funny scene. But Gulam kept on crying. "Catch him, the rogue, catch him." But the guards did not stir from their posts.

At last the blouse was made and delivered to the King. Akbar sent it to his Queen and rewarded the tailor for his work.

One day the Queen was walking down a street in Delhi, when she noticed a woman sporting an identical blouse made from the same material. She hastened back to the palace and reported to Akbar what she had seen. Akbar sent out his officers to

investigate and soon it became known that Gulam, the royal tailor, had indeed made the other blouse. Gulam was sent for and the King sternly ordered him to speak the truth.

"Gulam," thundered Akbar, "you have deceived me. How did you manage to make another blouse from the cloth I gave you?"

"Sir," replied Gulam humbly, "how could I have stolen any cloth? Your guards were so watchful that I could not have stolen anything. However, let me tell you what really took place."

"When I was here, working away for three days, my son





in search of me. I was angry and threw my shoe at him. He picked up the shoe and ran off. Then I remembered I had stuffed bits of cloth in the shoe. I asked your guards to arrest my son. They only laughed at me. When I went home the next day, I found that my wife had made a blouse for herself from those bits of cloth. What could I do? I could hardly bring back the blouse worn by my wife and

present it to the Queen. After all, I must take your cast off dress. How can I give the Queen my wife's cast off blouse? That's why I did not return it."

Akbar was dumbfounded at the cleverness of the tailor and was reminded of Birbal's assertion that all tailors stole some cloth. Later he found out that the tailor also came from Birbal's home town. Thus Birbal proved right and Akbar had to acknowledge it.



MOTHER: "Well, my boy, did you learn much on your first day at school?"

SON: "Not enough. I have to go back tomorrow."

The Peasant and the Demon

There was once a poor peasant who lived alone in the country. He had a little cottage and an acre or two of land and from this he managed to scrape a living.

It was hard work toiling from dawn to dusk on the land and the poor peasant was not getting any younger. Soon he would have to think about retiring but, alas, what could he retire on? He had not managed to save any money and there was nobody who could look after him in his old age.

One day, the poor peasant was returning home, after a hard day working in the field, when he saw a bright light shining in the darkness. He peered at it and saw that it was a fire made of red-hot coals and perched on top of the coals was a little demon. The peasant stopped and bowed to the demon, for he did not want to anger it by not saying "Good evening."

"Good evening, poor peasant," said the little demon. "It has come to my notice that

you will be retiring soon, but you have no money. I have taken it upon myself to make a bargain with you. Under this pile of red-hot coals is a chest full of treasure. It will be yours if you will give me half the crop that you grow in your field each year. You see, my hands are so hot that any delicate seedlings I touch shrivel up and it becomes impossible for me to grow anything."

"Very well, I accept," said the peasant, "but we must do this properly. You will take the half of the crop that grows above the ground and I will take the half that grows below the ground."

The bargain was agreed upon and the peasant and the demon parted company. The next year the farmer harvested his half of the crop. A few days later the demon came to the field, eager to harvest his half of the crop. "I have come for my part of our bargain, old man," he said, chuckling. Imagine the demon's anger and fury, when he saw that

crafty peasant had grown carrots, so all that he was left with were the leafy tops of the carrots.

The demon saw the peasant again and thinking that he was being clever and could not be so easily tricked again he said to him, "This time you crafty old man, I will have the half that grows beneath the ground and you will have the half that grows above."

"Very well, as you wish," replied the peasant.

Next year soon came round and it was time to harvest the crop again. The peasant went out into the field and gathered

his rightful half and a few days later the demon came again, rubbing his hands with glee and sure that the farmer had not fooled him this time. However, when the demon arrived he flew into a terrible rage.

Instead of carrots, the peasant had sown wheat and the half of the crop below the ground was nothing but the roots. The demon was furious and as he ran around the field, waving his arms and shouting, little red flames flew from his feet and hands. He became so hot with rage that he rushed to the nearest stream and, with a hiss and a plop, he leapt in. Of course, the water put out the demon's fire and as he swam to the bank of the stream and crawled out he could be heard to say, "Oh dear, I will never be able to trick a wicked demon again now. I have put my own fire out."

The poor peasant who had been watching this, at once rushed to the spot where the demon had hidden the treasure. To his great joy, there, beneath the heap of coals, was a large chest of jewels and gold. The peasant took the treasure and was able to live in comfort for the rest of his life.





In London with two of his outlaws, Allan a Dale and Little John. They were at the house of Maid Marian, and her friend, Gwen, when that King Richard had died in France.

The king's brother, Prince John, claimed that he was now the King of England and ordered his soldiers to capture Robin Hood, who loyal Richard Lion Heart. Robin Hood and the others fled from London to Sherwood Forest.

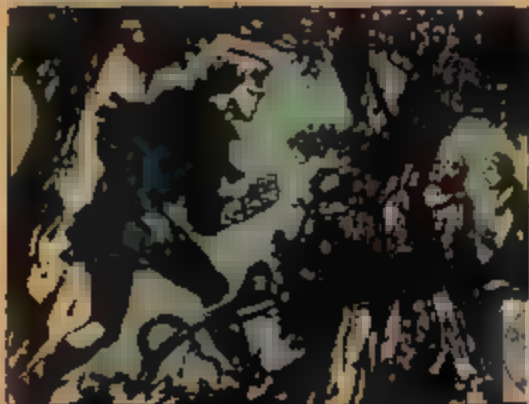


King John sat on his throne in his palace in London and waited for news of Hood. When the knights told him that Robin had not found he flew into a rage. "He must be caught," he shouted: "Bring him to me at once!"



"I will not feel safe until they are caught," declared King John. "Get after them, right away," he shouted at his knights. "You will [redacted] with your lives if you do not bring them back again." Meanwhile, the other outlaws who were waiting for the return of Robin did not worry until they saw Will Scarlet speeding towards them.

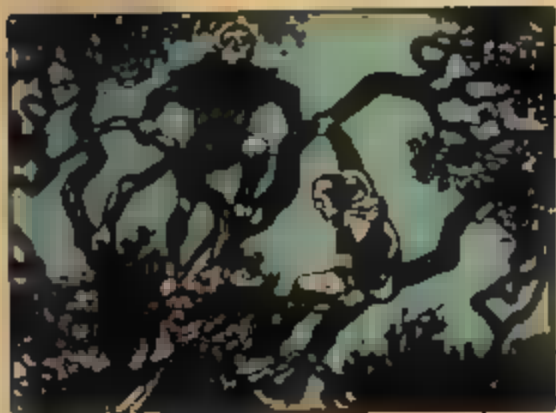
"He brings [redacted] [redacted] declared Friar Tuck, "and [redacted] looks [redacted] he has [redacted] news!" How right the Friar [redacted]. [redacted] Will Scarlet [redacted] [redacted] he started to shout his bad tidings so that all could hear. "King Richard [redacted] died in France!"



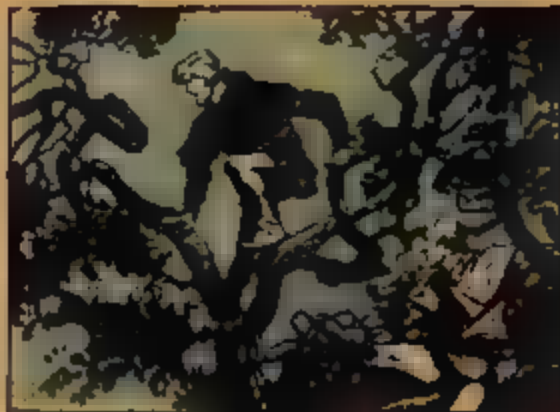


Friar Tuck and the outlaws knew that Robin Hood's life was in peril. They knew how much King John hated them all. "But, if Robin escapes," said the Miller "he will head for Sherwood. We must be ready to help him."

Friar Tuck gave his orders and the outlaws obeyed him in everything. Extra look-outs were posted along every path through the forest. Much the Miller climbed right to the top of the biggest oak to keep watch with Will Scarlet.



By that time, Robin and his weary companions were on the fringe of Sherwood Forest. "But the Friar and the others may not be here," Little John said thoughtfully. "We have been away a long time." "Sound your horn, Little John," said Robin. "We will soon know if we still have friends in Sherwood Forest."



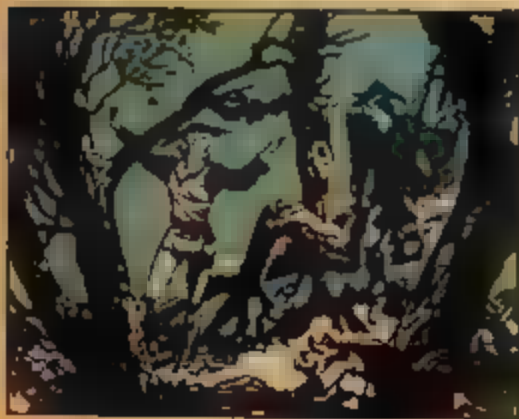
Robin was right. Will Scarlet, who perched on a bough of an oak looking for Robin, heard the horn and answered the signal gladly.

"Listen!" exclaimed Maid Marian. "Is that another horn I can hear?" "Yes, that's Much the Miller blowing his horn in answer to ours. It means that our friends are still in Sherwood waiting for us," said Robin. "Come on."



It was not long before Much the Miller and Will Scarlet saw them coming along a forest path. Hastily, they clambered down out of the oak to greet Robin. "But what about the two girls riding with them!" cried Much the Miller.

Friar Tuck and all the other outlaws were glad to have Robin with them once again, and they welcomed Maid Marian and Gwen to their camp. They cut down trees and set about making a neat little house for the two girls. Of course, the beautiful dresses the girls had worn back in London were not suitable for life in Sherwood Forest, so they



made special tunics in Lincoln Green with hose to match. "My word, you look fine!" said Friar John.

"If you are to be outlaws, too," said Robin, "then you must learn your way about the forest." "That will be grand," replied Maid Marian. So Robin showed her all the winding paths and hidden glades of the forest he loved.



Meanwhile, a Norman knight rode up the great gate of Nottingham Castle. "My name is Sir Geoffrey Malpert," he announced, proudly. "I have a message from King John for the Sheriff of Nottingham. Open, in the king's name."

Sir Geoffrey told the Sheriff, "The king orders you to take action against Robin Hood." "But that is what I am doing," replied the Sheriff. "I have sent Guy of Gisborne to Sherwood with an army to capture Robin Hood."



It was true. At that very moment, Guy of Gisborne was leading his army through Sherwood Forest. "Those Normans could not capture Robin Hood, but he can't escape me. I know the forest as well as he does," he declared, grimly.



CAN LION CLIMB TREES?

A lion is **able** to climb a tree, although it is not as skilful at it as a leopard. Although **both** animals are members of the cat family, the lion does **not** have the climbing powers of the cat; but the leopard **is** a natural climber, and is **as** much at home in a tree as on the ground. It will settle down quite happily on a fork in the tree. A lion will climb fairly high, however, going upward until it reaches those branches which would **not** **be** able **to** bear its weight. **A** fully-grown lion could weigh as much as 400 lb.

In the tropical regions of Africa **and** South-West Asia, where the lion is found, the ground **is** unbearably **hot** by midday. Lions **do** not like great heat, and to avoid the scorching rays of the sun they will **often** climb high into a tree to reach the coolness of leafy branches. A lion will also drag its "kill" **to** the lower branches of a tree, to prevent other **cats** stealing it when it is not there to keep an eye on its meal. From a height a lion gets a far wider view of the area **around**.



THE MOST PRECIOUS PEARL



There was once a Persian ruler who owned the most magnificent pearl. One day, he ordered the pearl to be brought to him and then he sent for his three sons.

"My sons," he said. "I have decided to give away my most precious possession, the most beautiful jewel in all my treasure. However, there are three of you and only one pearl, so I have decided to give it to the most deserving of you. I have decided to put you to a test to find out which of you is the most deserving. I shall send you away from my court for a year and a day. You will each travel alone. You may go where you like and do what you wish and when you return, you must tell me what you think has been your most noble action. From what you say, I shall judge who is the fittest to receive

my priceless pearl. Go, and may God be with you, my sons."

The three sons left their father's palace and, each one choosing a different road, went out to see what fortune had in store for them.

Time passed and at the end of the year, one day the three princes returned to their father's court. He sat waiting to receive them and ordered the first son to begin his story.

"My father," said the first son, "I travelled a lot during the time I was away from your court. I mixed with all kinds of people and did many kinds of work to earn my living. One day, I met a rich merchant, who liked the look of me and took me to work for him. He gave me some of his most precious jewels and told me to guard them. My brother, who was a jeweller in another town, told me to go to him. He told me to go to him to see what he could do for me. I went to him and he gave me a job. I worked for him for a year and a day and he gave me a lot of money. I came home with a lot of money and a lot of jewels. I will give you the most precious pearl." He showed me the pearl and I saw that it was the most precious pearl in the world. I will give it to you, my father, because I have done the most noble action of my life. I have given you the most precious pearl in the world."

guard the jewels carefully, for they were very valuable.

"The merchant emptied the jewels out of a big chest and put them into a bag without counting them. I could easily have taken out one or two jewels and kept them for myself, for no one would have known. They would have been enough to make me rich. Instead, I did my task honourably. I took the jewels and gave them to the merchant's brother, who gave me, in return a few gold coins."

"My son," replied the ruler, "This proves that you are honest. But, if you think about it, you must see that you could have done anything else without shaming yourself. To take even one of the jewels would have made you a thief. Any honest man would have taken the bag of jewels to the merchant's brother without taking any of the jewels out."

Then it was the turn of the second son.

"My father, I too travelled far and did all kinds of work," he said. "One day, as I was making my way in a big town, I passed by a large lake. A little boy was playing near the edge and as I watched him, he fell and rolled head over heels into

the water, just where it was deepest. At once, I plunged into the lake. I realised how deep and treacherous the water was and at first I could not find the boy, but in spite of the danger to myself, I went out desperately to find him and drag him to the side, in spite of his struggles, which threatened to drag me under with him.

"The boy was soon returned to his mother and now he has fully recovered and is none the worse for his wetting."

"My son, you did your duty,





and you are to be commended," said his father. "However, if you think about it a little, you will see that there is nothing else an honourable man could have done. It would have been a cowardly thing to see a young boy drowning in a lake and not try to help him, even at the cost of your own safety."

Then the father turned to the third son and asked him what he thought of his noblest deed.

"Well, father, I have travelled far and worked at many things and met many different kinds of people, but when the time came to make my way home here, I felt that I had done nothing which was really noble, or worthy of mention. Then, as I travelled through the moun-

tains, on my way back to the palace, I saw a man, asleep on the ground. He must have settled down to sleep in the night, when it was dark, for he was lying right on the edge of a great cliff. At the bottom of the cliff, hundreds of feet below, were jagged rocks. When he moved restlessly in his sleep, he might easily have rolled over the edge.

"When I went over to wake him, I saw that he was an old enemy of mine, a man whom I detest. He was more than once tried to do me harm and he loses no opportunity of being unpleasant to me. My first impulse was to go on my way without waking him and leave him to fate. Then I felt that I must not leave him there, knowing that he might roll over the edge of the cliff at any moment. I went up to him and, forcing myself to forget the times he had been unpleasant to me, I took hold of his shoulder and shook him hard, saying, 'Don't you know the danger you are in? This is no place to be to sleep.'

"The man woke up and looked around him. When he saw where he was, he jumped. He moved quickly. Then he

turned and recognised me. Instead of being grateful to me for saving him from danger, he replied roughly, "I suppose that by showing you have saved my life, you hoped to humiliate me. Don't think you will pay for this. I am you did not pull me away from that cliff edge out of kindness." Then he turned and went off, without a word of thanks. But even so, I would have been happy, knowing that I had left him there, where he might die."

The ruler looked thoughtfully at his third son.

"Truly, my son, you deserve the precious pearl, the priceless jewel in my treasure," he said.

Then he turned to his two other sons and the members of the court who were gathered around.

"My first son proved that he is an honest man," he said. "For he did his duty and performed the task which he had been given. My second son proved that he is courageous, for he dived instantly into a deep lake to rescue a drowning boy. Both received rewards. My first son was given several gold coins by the jeweller, as payment for having delivered the jewels to

him safely, my second son earned the gratitude of the family of the boy whom he saved. But my third son did more than this. He did a good deed, expecting no reward, for he knew that he would get no thanks from his enemy, but only evil in return." My son," continued the old man, "I count you as my most precious of all my treasure, more valuable than the priceless pearl, for to do good, even to those who do you harm, shows true purity of heart."



STUPID AND THE

POT OF GOLD

Many years ago, in a far-off land, there lived a poor peasant woman. This woman had a son, who was so foolish, that everyone in the village called him Stupid, until at last his real name was almost forgotten.

One day, his mother had to travel to a village a long way away. As she went out, she said to Stupid, "Now, you look after things while I am gone. You should not have

any trouble. In particular, look after the hen that is sitting in the shed. If she leaves the nest, catch her quickly and put her back on the eggs. If you do not, the eggs will get cold and there will be no chicks."

"Very well, mother," replied Stupid, "I will make sure that everything is all right."

No sooner had the old woman left on her journey, than the hen jumped down from the nest and went out into the yard. At once Stupid tried to catch her, but he was so clumsy and made so much noise, that the more he tried, the more the hen ran about. He tried throwing his hat at it, but the hat missed.

Stupid was feeling very worried by this time. He began to look around for something else to throw at the hen and he noticed a stout stick, lying on the ground. He picked it up and threw it at the hen. Normally, Stupid's throw was so bad that everything he threw would have missed, but unfortunately, the stick hit the poor



hen on the side of the head. She lay on the ground, quite still.

"Oh, what shall I do?" he cried. "I have killed the hen. The eggs will get cold, we will have no chicks and mother will be very angry."

At last he decided to sit on the eggs himself, to keep them warm until his mother came home. However, as he sat down, he kicked the eggs and smashed them. By this time, he was at his wit's end and feeling very hungry. Since the eggs were broken anyway, Stupid decided to eat them. He did so, but he did not find them very filling. He was still hungry. Catching sight of the dead hen, he thought he might as well make a meal of her.

He sat down and began to pluck the bird, sending feathers flying in all directions. When he had finished he made up a good fire and put the chicken on a spit, to roast.

While he was laying the tablecloth, a stray cat, attracted by the tempting smell of roast chicken, crept into the house and before Stupid could stop her, she seized the bird, spit and all, and ran off across the yard out of sight.



The foolish boy was now more worried than ever. It would not be long before his mother arrived home. Sure enough, when he looked out of the window, there was his mother coming along, in the distance. Stupid began to tremble with fear and he ran and hid in an old, disused oven.

When his mother came in, she could not see her son anywhere and began calling loudly. "Stupid, Stupid, where are you?"

For a long time there was silence. Stupid was too frightened to answer her. When, however, the mother went on calling and calling, a scared little voice cried out, "Here I am mother, hiding in the old oven."

"In the old what?" shouted his mother, with surprise.

"I am in the old oven!" Stupid yelled back.

"Well, then, come out once," his mother ordered. "Whatever were you hiding in there for?"

"It is a long story, mother," wailed the boy, "but it is enough to say that the hen is dead and gone and I am her eggs."

This did not satisfy the poor, peasant woman and she made Stupid tell the whole story from start to finish.

When he finished, she exclaimed, "Well, Stupid you are Stupid by name and stupid by deed and you will remain Stupid until the end of your days. It happens that I have here a piece of cloth that I have woven, which I wanted you to take to the market to sell, but what is the good of sending you, when you do such foolish things?"

"Oh, mother," said the boy, "try me once and I will promise to do everything exactly as you bid me."

"Very well," replied the woman, "you shall have one chance. Mind you, it will be your last. Take the piece of



cloth and go out and get the best price for it that you can, but be careful. Remember, on any account, no business with people who have a lot to say."

The boy took the cloth and set out for the market town. All the tradesmen were there and the streets were full of people. Stupid walked among them, crying out, "Cloth, fine



cloth, fine cloth for sale. Who will buy? Who will buy my fine roll of cloth?"

However, when any would-be buyer stopped him and asked him a question, Stupid would have nothing to do with them.

"How much do you want for your cloth, then?" asked one portly gentleman.

"I am sorry," replied Stupid,

"but I cannot possibly do business with you. You have far too much to say."

The man wandered away looking very puzzled. A little later, a finely-dressed lady came to Stupid.

"What do you want of cloth, you selling, boy?"

"I am sorry," said Stupid, "I am sorry," more, pushing her



■ was a ■ of few words and a customer that his mother would be pleased with, said happily, "You are just the man I have been looking for all day. Look, I have here some wonderful yellow cloth, hand-woven by my ■ mother. Will you buy it?"

Still there was no ■ and Stupid all but danced with joy.

"Take it," he offered. "You can examine it and see what fine quality it is. To- ■ I will call back for the money."

Flinging the roll of cloth at the base of the statue, Stupid went on his way.

That night, a tramp passed through the deserted courtyard, looking for a place to sleep. Seeing a ■ of good cloth lying ■ the ground, he picked it up and took it away.

"I will ■ able to get good money for this," he said to himself. "I will ■ able ■ buy food and lodging and some new clothes."

When Stupid came back the next day, there was the statue, just the same, but there was no cloth and, of course, no sign of the tramp.

"Can I have my money, please?" Stupid asked the statue.

into one of the flower-sellers, "but I cannot do business with you, madam. You have far ■ much ■ say for yourself."

In the end, nobody bothered about the boy with the roll of cloth and he ■ left standing ■ the market by himself. By this time, Stupid was finding the cloth rather heavy and ■ he decided to look for somewhere he might rest for a while. At last, he entered ■ grounds of a deserted old house. There was a plaster statue in the courtyard, which Stupid mistook to be a real person.

"Excuse me, friend," he said to the statue, "but can you tell ■ who lives in this house?"

He stood waiting for a reply, but, of course, there was none. Stupid, thinking that here at

politely, but although ■ repeated it over and over again, he got no reply.

"I know you are ■ of few words," said the foolish boy, "and that is a good thing, but if you do ■ give me my money, I shall set about you with this stick."

Raising a cudgel which he always carried, he struck the statue a sharp blow on the side. Of course, the plaster cracked and parts of it fell to the ground, but to Stupid's amazement, the statue was hollow and there inside was a pot of gold coins. Stupid seized ■ pot excitedly and rushed home to show his mother.

She was glad to see such a large amount of gold, for she was a poor woman, but she was afraid that if people found out how Stupid got the money, it would be taken away from her.

She knew that Stupid would not keep quiet about their good luck for very long and ■ she thought up a plan by which, even if Stupid told his story, nobody would think it was true.

The woman waited until Stupid was dozing by the front door and then she tiptoed upstairs and opened the windows



in the topmost room. Then she tipped out a shower of currants and raisins all over Stupid, down below. Stupid was very surprised but, as he was very fond of dried fruits he did not worry about where they ■ come from. He ate them all greedily and went back to sleep.

Peeping out of the upstairs window, Stupid's mother smiled. "The poor lad did not even wonder where the raisins and currants were coming from," she said to herself.

Once more she dropped down a shower of dried fruit, and ■ she expected, Stupid woke up just long enough to gobble them all up, then he settled down again to sleep.

It happened a day ■



later, that two of the villagers were arguing about a gold coin that had been found in the gutter. Each said that it belonged to him. While they were discussing it, who should come along but Stupid.

"Fancy fighting over such a miserable coin," said the first villager. "Why, we have a whole pot full of gold coins at home."

This made the villagers very suspicious and one of them reported Stupid to the police.

The following morning, two policemen came to Stupid's house and took him before the magistrate.

The Magistrate's Court was full of people, wanting to see what would happen to Stupid

there, right at the front, the magistrate, looking very stern.

"Now," said, looking at Stupid, "I understand that you have a pot of gold in your possession. How did you come by this?"

Everyone held their breath. What would Stupid say? Would the magistrate be satisfied?

There was silence in the

"Come along, Stupid," the magistrate prompted, "where and when did you find it?"

"Please, your honour," replied Stupid, "I found it inside a box, who would not pay for the cloth when it happened on the day it rained dried fruits."

"Why, the boy is utterly mad!" cried the magistrate. "Discharge him ■ once."

Everyone in the courtroom began talking ■ once, ■ Stupid was led out.

"All right," ■ of the policemen said to him, "you are free to ■ on your way now."

Stupid skipped happily down the steps of the Magistrate's

Courts and ran home to tell his mother what had happened.

Nobody ■ discovered how Stupid came by the money and so he and his mother were able to keep the pot of gold and live in comfort for the rest of their days.

"You may be Stupid by ■ and stupid by nature," his mother said to him, "but this time, you have certainly done us some good for once."

Nature is man's teacher. She unfolds her treasures to his search, unseals his eyes, illumines his mind, and purifies his heart; an influence breathes from all the sights and sounds of her existence.

—Alfred Billings Street



What does make your mouth water mean?

When you are chewing your ■, certain glands ■ salivary glands, which are ■ your mouth get to work. They secrete moisture which softens the food and helps in its digestion. These glands are working all the time and when you are hungry, ■, someone eating something you like, the glands make a lot of extra saliva, or water. ■ really is, and your mouth waters!



THE STAG

dressed in rags and tatters and had to sleep on the cold, hard ground.

One day, when there was less food to be found than usual, he sank down under a tree, feeling quite faint from hunger.

There an old man found him. "Old man," said the lazy man, "can you give me something to eat? I am so terribly hungry."

"My son," said the old man, "I have nothing to give you, but you look a sturdy and capable fellow. Why don't you make yourself a trap and wait patiently until you have caught something in it?"

The lazy man did not like the idea of having the bother of making a trap, but because he was so hungry, he took a length of old rope and did as the old man suggested. He twisted the rope around the trees until he had made a trap and he hoped that some creature of the forest would come running along and put its head through the rope, so that the rope pulled tight and held it fast.

There once lived a very lazy man. He was far too lazy to go to work and earn money to buy himself food, so all he had were the herbs and berries he could find in the forest where he lived.

As he wandered through the forest, he often said to himself, "It is very unjust that I was not born rich. If I had been born rich I could have had all the good food I could eat and a fine feather bed to sleep in and of course my garments would always be of the finest cloth."

However, the fact remained that he was not rich, never had enough food, and was always

When he had finished, he lay down again under the tree and went to sleep.

When he awoke, he saw, to his amazement, that he had caught a beautiful young stag. As he got up, the old man reappeared again.

"You should thank God for helping you catch ■■■ fine stag," he said.

The lazy ■■■ just laughed and said, "No, I shall not. I caught that stag myself. I made the trap, don't forget that. The merit is all mine."

As he said this, he got up and went over to the stag, to kill it, but the brave stag put up a great struggle and he knocked the lazy man over with his long antlers.

The man was ■■■ furious at this, that he snatched up the dead branch of a tree, which was

lying on the ground and began to beat the stag on the back. He hit the stag with ■■■ his might, so that it stumbled and fell.

Then the old man stepped forward. He took a wand out of his pocket and touched the stag with it. At once, the ropes fell off, the stag ■■■ to its feet, quite healed and it ran happily off into the forest.

The lazy man watched in amazement and he began to realise that this was no ordinary ■■■ but someone who had been sent to teach him a lesson.

He realised, at last, that a ■■■ can only be successful if he works hard himself and asks for God's help in his labours.

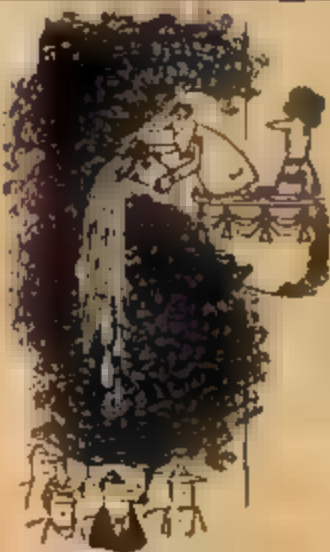
Since that day, so the story runs, the stag has ■■■ white spots ■■■ its back where it was injured by ■■■ lazy man.



WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

1. Which is the first State that has electrified all its villages?
2. Who are the largest employers in India?
3. What is the capital of Philippines?
4. Which is the smallest country?
5. Which country is called the 'Sugar Bowl of the World'?
6. Which is the 'land of the Midnight sun'?
7. Which is the world's largest office building?
8. Which is the largest State in India?
9. When was the first newspaper started in India? What is its name?
10. Which is the thickly populated city in the World?
11. How many Railway Zones are there in India?
12. Who won the largest number of Gold medals at the Munich Olympic meet?
13. How many Radio Stations are there in India?
14. Which is the first nuclear power station in India?
15. Which is the largest temple in the world?

Now Turn to Page 55 and Check your score!





THREE ADVICES.

In a certain village there lived a poor man called Govind. One day he told his wife that he was going to the city to earn some money, as there were no opportunities for work in the village.

He came to the city and found himself a job with a rich man. He was treated generously by his master who gave him food and clothes. In this manner a year passed.

But he was not paid any salary and for a long time Govind hoped that his master would pay him his dues. But many years passed and not a single paisa did he receive from his master. His patience wearing thin, he came to his master and said, "Sir, I have served you all these twenty years. Now I plan to go back to my village. Please pay me my dues."

His master replied, "Well, you'll get only three gold coins as your salary. I can

give something more precious than that. I'll give you three advices."

Govind was interested in the advices though he longed for a lot of money.

The rich man continued, "The first advice is that you should not worry about the matters which don't concern you. The second is that you should not be fickle and change your mind in the way. The third is, never give in to anger, and if you are angry in the night, control it till the morning."

Govind heard all this attentively and then left for his village to see his wife. On the way, he thought about the advices of his erstwhile master and the more he thought about it, the more crazy it sounded. Of what were advices when man needed a lot of wealth?

Thinking in this vein he came to a river and many people



tethered to stakes. They carried heavy bags of gold and silver. Nearby a man was busily taking out the coins and fixing them on the trees like leaves.

Govind was startled to see this strange behaviour. Here he was worried about lack of money and there was a man who was tacking gold pieces to the branches. He was about to accost the man and ask for an explanation of his strange behaviour when the first advice of his master came to his mind. So without a word he went his way. Just then the strange man called out to him. Rather surprised Govind turned and came up to the man.

The latter said, "For long

forty years I have been doing this. All who passed by were curious to know what I did, and in reply I cut off their heads. You are the first man who passed by without a word. Therefore, take these camels and all this money and may you be very happy."

Govind was overjoyed to receive such a splendid gift and happily drove the camels before him. A little later three merchants joined him and they all came to a dirt road which promised to shorten their journey. So the merchants said to Govind, "Good fellow. Let us take this short cut. Come with us and we'll let you share our lunch."

Govind was about to agree when he thought of his master's second advice. So he said, "No, no, masters, carry on. I prefer the straight path. If you wish, you may go and have your lunch. As for me, I shall keep watch over your merchandise."

The merchants agreed and took the dirt road. But they had hardly gone a few yards when they were ambushed by bandits and killed.

In the meanwhile, Govind waited patiently for the return of the merchants. When

did not come back even after a few days, he asked a passer by whether he had seen his three friends. The wayfarer acquainted him of the fate that had befallen the hapless merchants. Govind not knowing what to do with the merchandise of his friends loaded it on his camels and came to his village.

After secreting all the goods in a safe place, he came and knocked on his door. His wife opened the door but could not recognise a much changed Govind.

Govind said, "Madam, will you permit me to spend the night here?"

The wife replied, "Sir, my husband is not at home. I can't invite you inside, but you may sleep on the verandah."

Govind prepared his bed there. Then he saw a young man enter his house and noticed how eagerly his wife greeted the stranger. His anger knew no

bounds and he was on the point of demanding an explanation from his wife when the third advice came to his mind. So he decided to wait for dawn to arrive.

Early in the morning, Govind heard the sounds of the door being opened. His wife stood on the door bidding farewell to the youngman.

"Son, go and earn your living by the sweat of your brow," she said.

From her words Govind rejoiced to learn that the stranger was none other than his own son, whom he had not seen for a long time. So he said, "Dear, why should he work like a labourer? Look at all the wealth I've brought back."

The wife recognised him instantly and introduced him to the son who had been born after Govind had left for the city. Then all three were reunited and lived happily.



THE SELFISH GIANT

Once, long ago, in a far away country, there was a garden. It was a big garden, full of flowers and blossoming trees. There was thick, green grass for the children to play on and in the Autumn, the branches of the trees bent down under the heavy load of fruit.

The wonderful garden belonged to a giant, but all the children from the nearby village came to play there. All day long they laughed and sang and played.

"How happy we are," they would say at the end of the day, as they trailed home to bed. "What would we do without our wonderful garden?"

One day, however, the giant suddenly returned to his home. From his house, he heard merry shouts and laughter and when he looked to see where the noise was coming from he saw a lot of little urchins, playing in his lovely garden.

He stormed across the grass towards them. "What are you doing?" he called, in such a loud and terrible voice that all

the merriment stopped at once. "Don't you know that this is my garden? Get out at once, before I catch you, and don't ever come back."

The children were so terrified that they fled helter skelter, out of the garden and down the lane. They were all terrified of the big, bad-tempered giant.

The giant did not want any village urchins trampling on his garden and spoiling his garden. He built a high stone wall around the garden and just to make sure everyone understood that it was his garden, he put up a big board which said, PRIVATE KEEP OUT.

You see, he was a very selfish giant, very selfish indeed.

When the village children came creeping back to the garden to see if the giant had gone, they found that there was no way in and even the tiniest ones, who could not read the notice, could see the great, grim stone wall.

Sadly, they made their way back down the lane. There was nowhere for the

play. Often they came back to see if the giant had removed the notice, but it was always there and there was no way in through the big, stone wall.

The children talked and talked of the beautiful garden, where they had played so happily through the long Summer days, but they always talked in low whispers, in case the giant heard them and ■■■■ out to drive them away.

Then Winter came and the children had to stay indoors, for everywhere ■■■■ covered with deep, white snow and the cold North wind blew. ■■■■ was too cold to play outside for very long.

Finally, the snow disappeared and the ice melted and the green grass began to grow again. The buds appeared ■■■■ the trees and the flowers pushed their heads up from the soil, Spring had come at last.

The village children went laughing and dancing into the sunshine, to play. The whole countryside was full of the song of the birds and the scent of the flowers and the children ran ■■■■ once to their beautiful garden, for they thought the giant might have gone away during the

Winter, but they were disappointed.

There was the wall, as high and grim ■■■■ ever and there was the notice, saying KEEP OUT.

Inside the giant's however, no birds sang. The trees forgot to bud and the flowers did not bloom. There were no children around any more to make life pleasant and the snow and icy cold of Winter found themselves at home there. The cold North wind whistled around the wall and the frost covered it with crystals of ice.



"Spring has forgotten this garden," the frost and the snow called to each other in glee. "Let's live here all the year round."

The snow covered all the grass with a thick, white blanket and the frost painted the trees silver.

Once, a beautiful flower peeped up from the earth, certain that it had been asleep too long, but it took the big notice which the giant had put up and it was sad when it saw what was written on the notice, that it hid deep down in the earth again and went back to sleep.

"I wonder why Spring is so late this year?" said the puzzled giant to himself, but the Spring never did come, nor the Summer. Autumn brought golden fruits to the other gardens, but not to the giant's garden. Winter went on and on.

One morning, however, the giant was awakened by a wonderful sound. Really it was only a blackbird, singing in front of his window, but to the giant it was the sweetest sound on earth and he jumped from his bed so that he could hear it better.

"It looks as if Spring has come at last," said the giant,



happily, as he went to the window and looked out.

Down below in the garden, a wonderful thing had happened. The ice had cracked one of the big stones of the wall and the village children had found a small hole, just big enough for them to crawl through. One by one, they had crept inside to see their beloved garden once more. They ran across the snow-covered grass to the bare trees and the [redacted] were so happy to have the children back that they burst into bloom at once. The green leaves uncurled and shook and whispered softly. The snow melted away under the children's feet and the green grass pushed up from the earth in glee. At the sound of the children's voice, the North wind rushed shrieking away and the flowers began to poke their heads up from the ground to find out what was going on.

Even the tiniest and sleepiest flower began to push its way to the surface and shake its head in the soft breeze.

As for the children, they had quite forgotten the giant and his horrible notice, in their joy at being back in the garden once more. The boys rushed

over to their favourite trees and swung up into the branches and the branches bowed gracefully under their weight.

The girls played hide-and-seek and made themselves daisy chains from the little white flowers sprinkled over the grass.

The birds heard the shrill, piping voices of the children and came flying back.

"It must be Spring at last, in the giant's garden," they chirped to each other, as they flew over the stone wall. "And about time, too."

In the farthest corner of the garden, there was a little boy. He was so tiny that he could not reach the branches of a tree, however hard he tried. He stood on tiptoe, reaching up towards the leaves and a big tear rolled down his cheek.

The giant saw the little boy's tears, as he watched from his window and it made him very sad.

"How selfish I have been," he thought. "Now I know why Spring [redacted] came to my garden, for there was no joy and no laughter here, any more." He hurried downstairs and out [redacted] the garden.

When the children saw the giant, they were so afraid

him that they all rushed to scramble back through the hole in the wall—all except the little boy in the farthest corner. He was crying so hard, that he did not notice the giant coming towards him across the grass.

The giant went to the tiny boy and picked him up in his arms. Then he placed him in the lowest branch of the tree and held him while he swung there in delight. The child reached down and gave the giant a kiss on the cheek, for he was not afraid of him, at all.

The other village children were watching from a distance and when they saw this, they began to creep back in ones and twos, the bravest first, the others following slowly.

"The garden is yours, my little friends," said the giant. "You must come and play in it whenever you want to."

Then he took a pick-axe and

broke down the big stone wall and chopped down the notice. The giant became the greatest friend of all the children but especially he liked to help the tiniest and weakest children. They all learned to love and trust him and he had a new name for they called him the Friendly Giant. Ever after, in the wonderful garden of the giant, it was always Spring, for when he grew old and feeble, he was always surrounded by love and happiness.





MAHABHARATA

The story so far ...

The Pandava armies were preparing for the battle. In the meanwhile, Duryodhana beseeched Lord Bhishma to lead the Kaurava armies in the battle. Bhishma agreed to the request but said that he would not fight side by side with Karna, whom he disliked. When learnt of this condition, Karna declared that he would not fight as long as the old gentleman was on his feet. Though dismayed by this division in his ranks, Duryodhana appointed Lord Drona as supreme commander of the Kaurava forces. The two armies advanced, and ranged against each other in the battle field.

Lord Bhishma spoke to Duryodhana about the great warriors on both sides. Then Duryodhana said, "Sir, you refuse to fight against Sikhandi. He is a powerful fighter. Therefore you must have good reason for not going against him."

Bhishma replied, "Duryodhana, there is a reason for my reluctance to face Sikhandi. After the death of my father Santhanu, I ascended the throne and made Vichitravirya, the Crown Prince. Some years later Chitrangada died, and I stepped down in favour of Vichitravirya who became King. I acted as Regent."

Bhishma paused, and Duryodhana waited expectantly.



The Patriarch continued, as his mind filled with memories of ■ long dead past.

"Then came Vichitravirya's wedding. At that time, the King of Kasi decided to hold the Swayamvara of his three daughters, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika. As I ■ been invited, I went off to Kasi. ■ the assembled kings were surprised to see me there. I reassured them that I had not come to choose a bride for myself, but that I ■ ■ ■ behalf of Vichitravirya. Then I took the three princesses and challenged ■ the kings to fight me, if they wanted to rescue them. So ■ bitter battle ensued, and I emerged victorious. Then I returned

home and told my stepmother, Salyavathi, of what I had done.

"But Amba, the eldest princess requested that she ■ allowed ■ marry King Salwa, ■ she was in love with him, and he with her. ■ in accordance with her wishes I sent her to King Salwa who refused to marry her because ■ she ■ been abducted by Bhishma. Amba became furious ■ this rejection but she blamed ■ for her misfortune.

"She roamed the forests ■ thing with rage and plotting revenge. She ■ ■ hermit named Saikavathya, who took pity on her state.

"In consultation with some other hermits, they came to a decision. ■ accordance with that the hermits took her to Parasurama, the son of Sage Jamadagni to request him to accomplish Amba's desire, that is, force me to accept her as my bride, failing which a battle would ensue between the two of us ending in my death.

"Parasurama agreed to try the impossible and sent word to me. I hastened to the banks of the river Saraswathi to meet him. When ■ ■ me, he said, "Bhishma, you have v ■ never to marry. Why then ■ you abduct this maiden? H ■

committed ■ offence, you have added to it by abandoning her to the forest. Now she ■ nowhere to go. Therefore, you must marry her.

"I explained as best I could the reasons for my actions. After all, she had requested ■ to release her. I could not be blamed if King Salwa did not want her.

"But Parasurama paid scant attention to my words and challenged me to fight him.

"A great ■ was fought by us for twenty-four days on ■ field of Kurukshetra and at last Parasurama admitted his defeat at my hands. Then he advised Amba ■ seek my protection and went back to his hermitage on Mount Mahendra.

"Writhing in humiliation, and burning with rage, Amba sat ■ the banks of Yamuna and prayed to Lord Siva for twelve long years. Many were the attempts made to disturb her meditation, but nothing succeeded, and at last Lord Siva appeared before her. She demanded the power of revenge over me, and the Almighty prophesied that she would be reborn ■ ■ woman who would later become a man and be the instrument of my death. Then Amba jumped



into the sacrificial fire and ended her life. This Sikhandi is the ■ who was once a woman, sworn ■ ■ me. And that was ■ ■

"King Dhrupada who had tasted defeat at my hands, also prayed ■ Lord Siva for revenge upon me. The Almighty decreed that a child would be born to him to accomplish his desire. The child would ■ born a female but would ■ transformed into a male.

"A daughter was born ■ Dhrupada and he was sorely disappointed because he had wanted a ■ who would be a great warrior. So he brought his daughter up as a male ■ ■ told everyone that a son had



been born to him. The child was named Sikhandi, and in course of time learnt martial arts.

"One day Dhrupada's wife said, 'The Almighty declared that our child would be transformed. But so far nothing has happened. So let us arrange his wedding.'

"Accordingly Sikhandi was married to the daughter of King Daasarus. The new bride's name was also Sikhandi.

"But the latter told the truth about her husband and sent word to her father, who highly incensed at this deception, gathered forces and invaded the land of King Dhrupada. The king and queen were alarm-

ed at this development and did not know what to do.

"At this Sikhandi went to the forest and sought refuge with a sprite named Sthanukarna. The latter taking pity on the hapless Sikhandi said, 'Don't worry. I'll assume your form for some time, and you can be a man once more. Go back to your father, and he'll rejoice to see your transformation. Then all danger will be averted. Once I am established, you can come back here and we'll trade our identities.'

"King Dhrupada was happy to see his daughter transformed into a man and sent word to King Daasarus who sent some emissaries to test for themselves the truth of the former's assertion. When he was told that Sikhandi was indeed a man and not a woman, he went back to his kingdom after rebuking his daughter severely for misleading him.

"Meanwhile, Kubera, Lord of all the sprites came and Sthanukarna was deeply annoyed. The latter would not let him. So he dragged the hapless sprite to his presence and demanded to know the reason



for the transformation. Sthanukarna revealed his pact with Sikhandi and pleaded for mercy. But Lord Kubera cursed him to remain a woman all his life.

"Then when Sikhandi returned, Sthanukarna told him of his personal misfortune, but agreed that the former could always retain his male form."

Bhishma ended this long and rambling chronicle of Sikhandi and said with a heavy sigh,

"Duryodhana, I cannot kill

this Sikhandi. Though the prince has now retained his male form, yet I cannot kill him, for he was once a woman. I can no more fight against those who disguise themselves as women, than kill those who have been transformed into men, after having been women."

Duryodhana realised with a sinking feeling that the invincible patriarch would not fight against that 'one man' in the battlefield.

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. HARYANA | 9. 1781-HICKEY'S |
| 2. RAILWAYS | CALCUTTA GAZETTE |
| 3. [REDACTED] | 10. MONACO-37, 687 sq. miles |
| 4. VATICAN CITY - 108.7 Acres | 11. NINE |
| 5. CUBA | 12. [REDACTED] SPITZ - 8 [REDACTED] Medals |
| 6. NORWAY | 13. SEVENTY NINE |
| 7. PENTAGON | 14. [REDACTED] |
| 8. [REDACTED] PRADESH | 15. ANGKOR - [REDACTED] (CAMBODIA) |



THE LUCKY RING

Long, long ago there lived in a tiny hamlet a man called Raghu. He had a son named Madhu. Some years later Raghu's wife died and he married again a woman called Munni.

When a son was born to Munni, she began to ill-treat her stepson, Madhu. Unable to bear this ill-treatment any longer, little Madhu who was now on sixteen now, came to his father and said, "Father, permit me to go away from here. I shall travel to far distant lands and earn my living."

Poor Raghu, who was powerless to help his son, heaved a sigh and said, "I won't stop you. God knows how unfortunate you've been here. Go, my son, and make your way in the world. I give you this ring which belonged to your mother. Some day when you come back from your travels, I'll recognise

you by this ring which I place on your finger."

Madhu thanked his father and set out. He travelled far and wide and after many years returned home. But as ill luck would have it, he lost his mother's ring in a dark forest.

When he arrived his father had some difficulty in recognising him, but Munni, his step-mother refused to acknowledge him and declared he was an impostor who came to rob her own child of his inheritance. She spoke angrily to her husband, "Where is the ring which you gave your son? Only then can we really take him as our own."

Raghu thought this was only reasonable and asked Madhu to furnish proof of his identity by producing the ring. As Madhu had lost the ring he could not prove anything and so left his home, once again, a footloose wanderer.

As he was retracing his steps through the same forest he saw an old woman staggering under a load of firewood. Madhu quickly ■■■ to her aid and relieved her of ■■■ of the burden.

The old woman blessed him and said, "Son, you have been kind to me. But let me warn you. Don't tarry here. Great danger awaits." Then she hobbled away.

Unmindful of her warning Madhu went deep into the forest and ■■■ face to face with a dreadful looking ogre.

The ogre saw him and said mildly, "Little man, would ■■■ like to work for me?"

Madhu was surprised to hear this, but boldly declared himself ready to work and enquired what kind of work awaited him.

The ogre replied, "Oh! Nothing very difficult. You must cut down the trees I show you and make a path through the forest. Right ■ the end of the forest, there ■ a huge banyan tree. On top of that tree you'll find a nest full of jewels and precious things. If you've finished my work in a year's time, all that treasure is yours. But if you don't finish the work by that time, I'll claim you as my slave."

Madhu agreed and went to the ogre's lair where he was introduced to the latter's wife who was none other than the old woman he had helped in the forest. But she pretended not to know him.

Next morning, Madhu armed with an axe set out for the forest to ■ the trees. But the trees chosen by the ogre were so tough that try ■ he might, Madhu could not even dent them. He despaired of ever finishing his work and lamented his fate loudly. The ogre's wife took pity on him. She whispered, "Leave the first ■ alone. Cut the other





and make your path. You'll be able to get out easily. Don't let my husband catch you cheating on him."

Madhu did as he was bid and had the ogre made a path. The ogre came everyday to inspect the work and finding that not a single one of the fifty trees had been cut down was convinced that Madhu would never be able to finish the job.

Secretly Madhu worked on and reached the edge of the forest where stood the huge banyan tree. Clambering on top he found a bird's nest brimful with the king's jewels. One

corner he found the ring he had lost.

He lost no time in running to the king and delivered all that treasure to the ruler. The latter was overjoyed and as he had promised to marry his daughter to the one who recovered the royal jewels, he celebrated the wedding of Madhu and the princess.

Raghu was happy to hear that his son had made good. Even Munni was ready to proclaim to the whole world that Madhu was her son, for after all, was he not now, the son-in-law of the king?



Have birds got teeth?

The birds of today ~~haven't~~ but ~~traces~~ of teeth have been found in fossilized remains of prehistoric birds in Germany. The first, the earliest known to man, was about the size of a crow. It had a long bill like a beak and sixteen teeth, most of which were in the upper jaw. ~~Some~~ of our present-day birds have strong "gums" which could be used as a life others have tough, ~~leathery~~ skin on their bills.



THE GHOST'S GIFT

Kishore was a farmer who owned a lot of lands near Mathura. He had a few acres of land which he wanted to sell but there were no buyers because of the rumour that ghosts haunted the land.

Mangal was a stranger to the village and wanted to buy suitable cultivable land. Some mischievous lads of the village directed him to Kishore, who happily sold the farmer his haunted land.

Mangal was very happy to buy land so cheap. Of course, he was ignorant of the fact that there were ghosts on that land, otherwise he would never have consented to buy from Kishore. The latter eager to sell his land at any cost hid the true facts from the buyer.

Mangal built himself a farm house and began to cultivate the land. Then he went out to hire guards for his land and

discovered that one in the village was eager to come because of the presence of the ghosts on the land. He realised that he had been deceived but there was nothing that he could do about it.

He resolved to stand guard himself. That night he went alone to his land and hid behind some corn stalks. At the stroke of twelve, the ghosts arrived with a moaning noise and commenced dancing. Each ghost was covered from the foot in a dark blanket. As they danced round their leader, the ghosts chanted, "Give me one, give me one!" Then this continued till dawn came and then they disappeared into the mists.

Mangal was intrigued by their weird chant but was relieved to find that the ghosts did not damage his field.



The next night he covered himself with a blanket and mingled with the ghosts, taking part in the dance they had done. When he reached the Head ghost and chanted, "Give me one," a dazzling white necklace was pressed into his hands. Cleverly avoiding the ghosts he ran home and in the light of his hurricane examined his gift.

Lo and behold! it was a glittering chain studded with diamonds. He prised loose one from the chain, sold it for a handsome sum and began to live in great comfort.

But he could not keep the secret of his wealth from his wife who lost no time in communicating her good fortune to her neighbours.

news of Mangal's sudden riches travelled fast and at last reached the ears of Kishore.

Now his greed was aroused by this revelation and he determined to snatch another necklace from the ghosts.

That night he crept into Mangal's fields like a thief and hid his time. At the stroke of twelve, the ghosts came to the field with ■ whoosh and began their merry prancing. Kishore crept from his hiding place and joined the ghostly throng. He danced his way to the side of the leader and called out, "Give ■ one." A necklace was pressed into ■ hand. Kishore receiving the precious jewels stopped to admire them in the pale moonlight and he was starkly outlined to the ghosts who pounced on him.

"Ah! This is the same man who tricked us last time," cried out the Head ghost.

"Let us teach him a good lesson," cried out another.

"Let's teach him not to rob honest people," said yet another.

So they ■ ■ on him and ■ him black and blue. Poor Kishore fainted away and the ghosts disappeared with the first rays of dawn.

That was the state in which Mangal discovered him next day. Prompt medical aid ■ given and Kishore was carried home.

But from that day he ■ never the ■ man. He could ■ bring himself to speak of ■ shame and pretended ■ to know what ■ happened to him ■ fateful night.

As for Mangal ■ sold all the diamonds and became extremely prosperous. He never revisited his fields in the night and allowed the ghosts to romp around ■ they pleased.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Entry No. 1000000



Entry No. 1000000

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
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WHY DOES AN ANIMAL HAVE A TAIL?

A tail is by no means just decoration; in most cases it has a very useful purpose. Creatures all the time may use the tail as an extra limb by which to hang from a branch or swing about among the treetops. Flying-foxes and squirrels find tail useful when gliding through the air, and the kangaroo uses it while resting. A cat balances by twitching its tail as it walks along a fence; a dog's becomes a rudder so that it can turn at speed; the beaver in the water uses its tail as a paddle; and there is the sheep whose tail is a food store. The fat-tailed sheep of the African and Asian deserts builds up such a store of fat that its tail may weigh as much as 60 lb. Horses and cows find their tails excellent for flicking away flies and other pests.



Above: The squirrel uses its tail while in flight and the kangaroo (right) when taking rest. Top right: A fat-tailed sheep of South Africa.



Does a Flamingo stand on one leg when sleeping?

Although it has very long and thin legs, the flamingo has such a fine sense of balance that it can stand for hours while perched on one leg. In fact, its favourite position is to stand with leg tucked up under the body and its head buried beneath the shoulder feathers. When seen from a distance, a flamingo on one leg looks something like a giant flower on a very thin stalk.

Flamingoes ~~are~~ ~~are~~ too. Yet this may not be too surprising, for the bird has webbed feet and is related to swans and ducks.



FIDDY goes Snap Happy!

(Cartoonist Roland Fiddy has been a professional photographer)



"Of course we're dirty! You wanted us to look natural didn't you?"



"Come on now—don't be camera shy!"



"For goodness sake smile!"



"Daddy: How can I snap you when you're running around?"

SHARE THEM!



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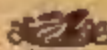
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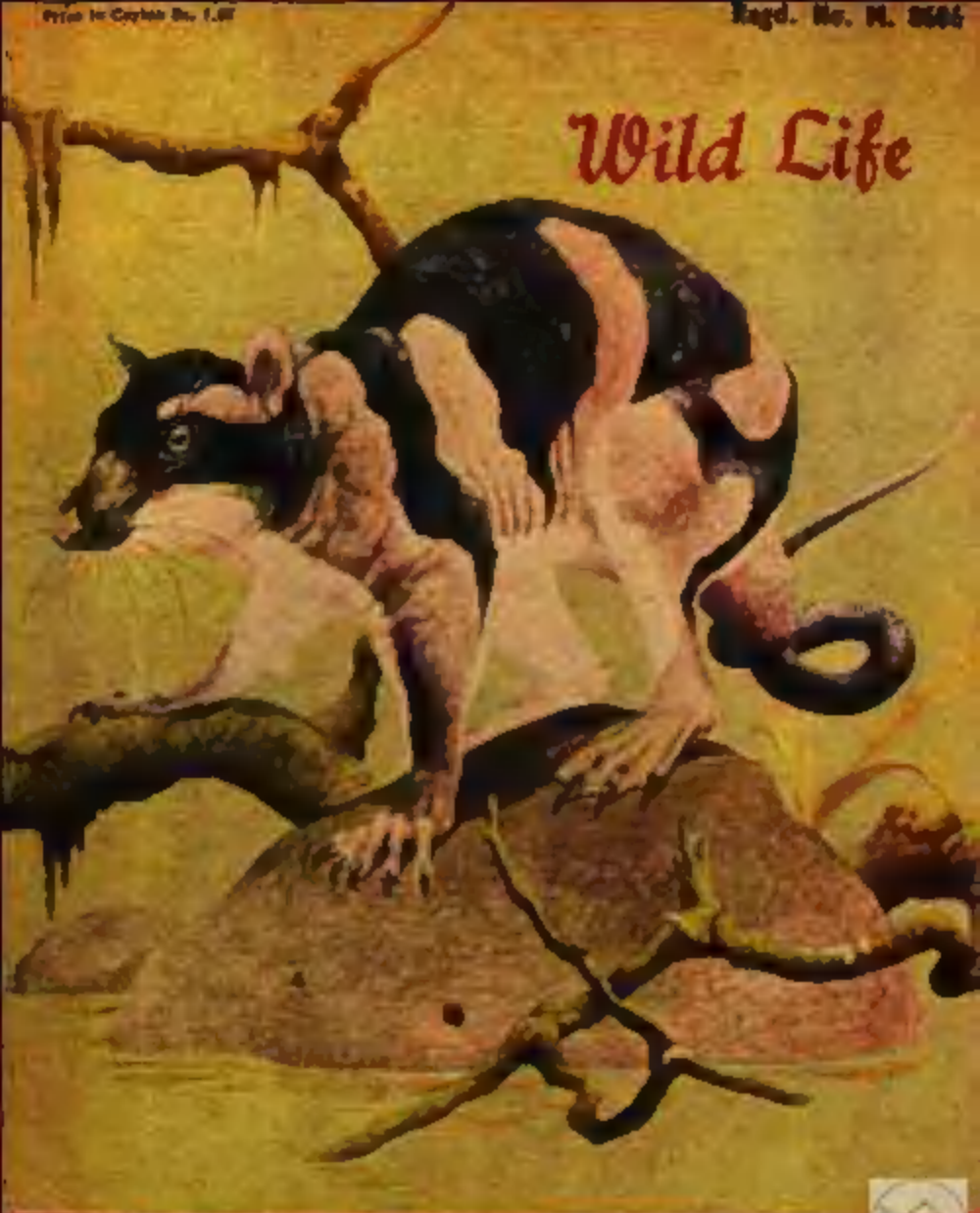
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